

Did Girls Deserve Sports in High School in the 1960s

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People in the 1960s did not think girls' high school sports were important, but in today's society, girl's participation in sports is valued a lot more. Think back to high school! Some of your fondest memories might have something to do with sports. Sports have been in high schools since before anyone can remember, for males at least.

Think again. If you were in high school from the 1970s until now, then some of your fondest memories might be girls' sports. Before the 1970s there were no female sports, but thanks to new laws, female sports are possible.

High school in the 1960s seemed like a really fun and exciting time. Everyone was into "flower power". Teens were free and loose. It was when women were fighting for rights a little more and young girls were establishing themselves as part of society. However, there was one other big difference from high school, then and now. Most people do not think about this when they think of school in the Sixties but then when they hear about it are surprised. There were no sports for girls, except for volleyball in a couple of schools. Cheerleading was also available but it was not considered a sport, it was just an activity. Most of all girls schools did not even have volleyball and cheerleading. Girls played sports with the boys outside of school but in school, they were not allowed. "Boys had such sports as basketball, track and football, but

girls didn't, we just had to be spectators," wrote one historian. All the girls were confused. They wanted to know why boys could play sports but they could not. Some even took it as an insult: "it was as if they were saying we were not good enough to play sports, "it's a man's job" wrote one person.

Once the girls started getting very frustrated there was a change in plans. In 1972, Title IX of the educational amendments was passed. This federal law prohibited "sex discrimination in an educational program or activity at any educational institute that is a recipient of federal funds."

This was like a release for high school girls. This new rule included all sports, band, drama and other extracurricular activities. It requires that women be provided opportunities to participate in sports. Once this law was passed a lot of things started changing: girls were finally able to participate in sports.

Even though girls were able to participate, conditions still were not fair. Even though it was a federal law a lot of schools still did not follow them. Even schools that did found ways to avoid it. They just would not supply the girls' teams, would not schedule games, or practices, would not provide coaches and would not give them locker rooms. Other ways to weaken girls' sports teams was to not provide with places to play. They would not give them any kind of publicity; they would not recruit athletes. This may seem like it's not really much, but it can cripple an up and coming sports team.

High schools eventually started to get better with allowing girls to participate in sports. Nowadays girls can play just as many sports as boys. Even though a lot has changed, some schools are still breaking the law. Most schools do not know it, but they are still breaking it. Some of the easiest ways of breaking it is when schools give the boys letter jackets and the girls just get certificates of participation. Discrimination also occurs when boys sporting events get scheduled at later times; this makes it easier for family and spectators to attend.

Before Title IX in 1972 less than 300,000 girls participated in high school sports. Now 1.8 million girls participate. Even though girls have always been discriminated against, in sports a lot of changes have been made and high school sports have defiantly helped improved women's rights. [From Amy Donaldson," Women have come a long in sports," www.Deseretnews.com/dn/view/o,1249,4051542,00.html. (July 1, 2002); Student historian's interview of Aleda Gregoire, Sept. 25, 2004; Student Historian's interview of Sandra Watkins, Sept. 27, 2004; Womens Sports Foundation. Title ISQ&A, www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi-bin/iow/issues/rights/article.html?record+888, (Apr. 19, 2004).]